The Native Son

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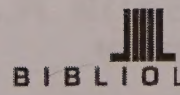

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THE NATIVE SON

BY

INEZ HAYNES IRWIN

AUTHOR OF

"THE CALIFORNIACS"
"ANGEL ISLAND"
"THE LADY OF KINGDOMS"
"PHOEBE AND ERNEST"

SAN FRANCISCO
A. M. ROBERTSON
MCMXIX

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TO THOSE

PROUD NATIVE SONS

JAMES W. COFFROTH

MEYER COHN — PORTER GARNETT

JOHN CROWLEY — WILLIE RITCHIE

J. CAL EWING — JAMES WILSON

ANDREW J. GALLAGHER

AND TO THOSE

APOLOGETIC ADOPTED SONS

ALBERT M. BENDER — AUSTIN LEWIS

SAM BERGER — XAVIER MARTINEZ

GELETT BURGESS — PERRY NEWBERRY

MICHAEL CASEY — PATRICK O'BRIEN

PATRICK FLYNN — FREMONT OLDER

WILL IRWIN — LEMUEL PARTON

ANTON JOHANSEN — PAUL SCHARRENBERG

WALDEMAR YOUNG

ALL OF WHOM HAVE PLAYED
SOME GRACEFUL PART IN TRANSLATING
CALIFORNIA TO ME

THIS APPRECIATION IS DEDICATED

THE NATIVE SON

THE only drawback to writing about California is that scenery and climate—and weather even—will creep in. Inevitably anything you produce sounds like a cross between a railroad folder and a circus program. You can't discuss the people without describing their background; for they reflect it perfectly; or their climate, because it has helped to make them the superb beings they are. A tendency manifests itself in you to revel in superlatives and to wallow in italics. You find yourself comparing adjectives that cannot be compared—*unique* for instance. *Unique* is a persistent temptation. For, the rules of grammar notwithstanding, California is really the

most unique spot on the earth's surface. As for adjectives like *enormous, colossal, surpassing, overpowering* and nouns like *marvel, wonder, grandeur, vastness*, they are as common in your copy as commas.

Another difficulty is that nobody outside California ever believes you. I don't blame them. Once I didn't believe it myself. If there was anything that formerly bored me to the marrow of my soul, it was talk about California by a regular dyed-in-the-wool Californiac. But I got mine ultimately. Even as I was irritated, I now irritate. Even as I was bored, I now bore. Ever since I first saw California, and became, inevitably, a Californiac, I have been talking about it, irritating and boring uncounted thousands. I begin placatingly enough, "Yes, I know you aren't going to believe this," I say. "Once I didn't believe it myself. I realize that it all sounds impossible. But after

you've once been there——" Then I'm off. When I've finished, there isn't an hysterical superlative adjective or a complimentary abstract noun unused in my vocabulary. I've told all the East about California. I've told many of the countries of Europe about California. I even tell Californians about California. I will say to the credit of Californians though that *they* listen. Listen! did I say *listen?* They drink it down like a child absorbing its first fairy tale.

In another little volume devoted to the praise of California, Willie Britt is on record as saying that he'd rather be a busted lamp-post on Battery Street than the Waldorf-Astoria. I said once that I'd rather be sick in California than well anywhere else. I'm prepared to go further. I'd rather be in prison in California than free anywhere else. San Quentin is without doubt the most delightfully situated prison in the whole

world. Besides I have a lot of friends —but I won't go into that now. Anyway if I ever do get that severe jail-sentence which a long-suffering family has always prophesied for me, I'm going to petition for San Quentin. Moreover, I would rather talk about California than any other spot on earth. I'd rather write about California than any other spot on earth. Is it possible that any Californian Chamber of Commerce has to *pay* a press agent? Incredible! Inexplicable! I wonder that local millionaires don't bid their entire fortune for the privilege. Now what has Willie Britt to say?

Yes, my idea of a pleasant occupation would be listing, cataloguing, inventorying, describing and—oh joy!—visiting the wonders of California. But that would be impossible for any one enthusiast to accomplish in the mere three-score-and-ten of Scriptural allotment. Methusalah might have at-

tempted it. But in these short-lived days, ridiculous to make a start. And so, perforce, I must share this joyous task with other and more able chroniclers. I am willing to leave the beauty of the scenery to Mary Austin, the wonder of the weather to Jesse Williams, the frenzy of its politics to Sam Blythe, the beauty of its women to Julian Street, the glory of the old San Francisco to Will Irwin, the splendor of the new San Francisco to Rufus Steele, its care-free atmosphere to Allan Dunn, if I may place *my* laurel wreath at the foot of the Native Son. Indeed, when it comes to the Native Son, I yield the privilege of praise to no one.

For the Native Son is an unique product, as distinctively and characteristically Californian as the gigantic redwood, the flower festival, the ferocious flea, the moving-picture film, the annual boxing and tennis champion, the golden poppy or the purple prune.

There is only one other Californian product that can compare with him and that's the Native Daughter. And as for the Native Daughter——— But if I start up that squirrel track I'll never get back to the trail. Nevertheless some day I'm going to pick out a diamond-pointed pen, dip it in wine and on paper made from orange-tawny poppy petals, try to do justice to the Native Daughter. For this inflexible moment, however, my subject is the Native Son. But if scenery and climate —and weather even—do creep in, don't blame me. Remember I warned you. Besides sooner or later I shall be sure to get back to the main theme.

In the January of 1917 I made my annual pilgrimage to California. On the train was a Native Son who was the hero of the following astonishing tale. He was one of a large family, of which the only girl had married a German, a professor in an American

university. Shortly before the Great War, the German brother-in-law went back to the Fatherland to spend his sabbatical year in study at a German university. Letters came regularly for a while after the war began; then they stopped. His wife was very much worried. Our hero decided in his simple western fashion to go to Germany and find his brother-in-law. He travelled across the country, cajolled the authorities in Washington into giving him a passport, crossed the ocean, ran the British blockade and entered the forbidden land. Straight as an arrow he went to the last address in his brother-in-law's letters. That gentleman, coming home to his lunch, tired, worried and almost penniless, found his Californian kinsman smoking calmly in his room. The Native Son left money enough to pay for the rest of the year of study and the journey home. Then he started on the long trip back.

In the English port at which his shi
touched, he was mistaken for a disloy
newspaper man for whom the Britis
Secret Service had long been seekin
He was arrested, searched and submi
ted to a very disquieting third degre
When they asked him in violei
explosive tones what he went int
Germany for, he replied in his milc
unexcited Western voice—to give h
brother-in-law some money. All Eu
rope is accustomed to crazy Americar
of course, but this strained credulity t
the breaking point; for nobody wh
has not tried to travel in the war cour
tries can realize the sheer unbeliev
bility of such guilelessness. The Britis
laughed loud and long. His pape
were taken away and sent to Londo
but in a few days everything was r
turned. A mistake had been made, th
authorities admitted, and proper apol
gies were tendered. But they release
him with looks and gestures in whic

an abashed bewilderment struggled with a growing irritation.

That is a typical Native Son story.

If you are an Eastener and meet the Native Son first in New York (and the only criticism to be brought against him is that he sometimes chooses—think of that—*chooses* to live outside his native State!) you wonder at the clear-eyed composure, the calm-visioned unexcitability with which he views the metropolis. There is a story of a San Francisco newspaper man who landed for the first time in New York early in the morning. Before night he had explored the city, written a scathing philippic on it and sold it to a leading newspaper. New York had not daunted him. It had only annoyed him. He was quite impervious to its hydra-headed appeal. But you don't get the answer to that imperviousness until you visit the California which has produced the Native Son. Then you understand.

Yes, Reader, your worst fears are justified; I'm going to talk about scenery. But don't say that I didn't warn you! However, as it's got to be done sometime, why not now? I'll be perfectly fair, though; so—

For the Native Son has come from a State whose back yard is two hundred thousand square miles (more or less) of American continent and whose front yard is five hundred thousand square miles (less or more) or Pacific Ocean, whose back fence is ten thousand miles (or thereabouts) of bristling snow-capped mountains and whose front hedge is ten thousand miles (or approximately) of golden foam-topped combers; a State that looks up one clear and unimpeded waterway to the evasive North Pole, and down another clear and unimpeded waterway to the elusive South Pole and across a third clear and unimpeded waterway straight to the magical, mystical, mysterious Orient. This sense of amplitude gives the Native Son an air of su-

periority . . . Yes, you're quite right, it *has* a touch of superciliousness —very difficult to understand and much more difficult to endure when you haven't seen California; but completely understandable and endurable when you have.

—Californiacs read every word Easterners skip this paragraph—

Man helped nature to place Italy, Spain, Japan among the wonder regions of the world; but nature placed California there without assistance from anybody. I do not refer alone to the scenery of California which is duplicated in no other spot of the sidereal system; nor to the climate which matches it; nor to its super-mundane fertility, nor to its super-solar fecundity. The railroad folder with its voluble vocabulary has already beaten me to it. I do not refer solely to that rich yellow-and-violet, springtime bourgeoning which turns California into one huge Botticelli

background of flower colors and sheens. I do not refer to that heavy purple-and-gold, autumn fruitage, which changes it to a theme for Titian and Veronese. I am thinking particularly of those surprising phenomena left over from pre-historic eras; the "big" trees—the *sequoia gigantea*, which really belong to the early fairy-tales of H. G. Wells, and to those other trees, not so big but still giants—the *sequoia sempivirens* or redwoods, which make of California forests black-and-silver compositions of filmy fluttering light and solid bedded shade. I am thinking also of that patch of pre-historic cypresses in Monterey. These differ from the straight, symmetrical classic redwoods as Rodin's "Thinker" differs from the Apollo. Monstrous, contorted shapes—those Monterey cypresses look like creatures born underground, who, at the price of almost unbearable torture, have torn through

the earth's crust, thrusting and twisting themselves airward. I refer even to that astonishing detail in the general Californian sulphitism, the seals which frequent beach rocks close to the shore, a short car ride from the heart of a city as big as San Francisco.

California, because —and this— of rich gold deposits, and a richer golden sunshine, its golden spring poppy and its golden summer verdure, seems both literally and figuratively, a golden land golden and gay. It is a land full of contradictions however. For those amazing memorials from a prehistoric past give it in places a strange air of tragedy. I challenge this grey old earth to produce a strip of country more beautiful, also more poignant and catastrophic in natural connotation, than the one which includes these cypresses of Monterey. Yet this same mordant area holds Point Lobos, a headland which

displays in moss and lichens all the minute delicacy of a gleeful, elfin world. I challenge the earth to produce a region more beautiful, yet also more gay and debonair in natural connotation, than the one which enfolds San Francisco. For here the water presents gorgeous, plastic color, alternating blue and gold. Here Mount Tamalpais lifts its long straight slopes out of the sea and thrusts them high in the sky. Here Marin County offers contours of dimpled velvet bursting with a gay irridescence of wild flowers. Yet that same gracious area frames the grim cliff-cup which holds San Francisco bay—a spot of Dantesque sheerness and bareness.

—and this.

This is what nature has done. But man has added his deepening touch in one direction and his enlivening touch in another. The early fathers —Spanish—erected Missions from one end of the State to the other. These

are time-mellowed, mediaeval structures with bell-towers, cloisters and gardens, sun-baked, shadow-colored; and in spots they make California as old and sad as Spain. Later emigrants —French—have built in the vicinity of San Francisco many tiny roadside inns where one can drink the soft wines of the country. Framed in hills that are garlanded with vineyards, these inns are often mere rose-hidden bowers. They make California seem as gay as France. I can best put it by saying that I know of no place so "haunted" in every poetic and plaintive sense as California; yet I know of no place so perfectly suited to carnival and festival.

All of this is *part* of the reason why you can't surprise a Californian.

This looks like a respite, but there's no real relief in sight Easterners. Keep right on reading, Californiacs!

YES, California is beautiful.

Once upon a time, a Native Son lay dying. He did not know that he was going to die. His physician had to break the news to him. He told the Californian that the process would not be long or painful. He would go to sleep presently and when he woke up, the great journey would have been accomplished. His words fulfilled themselves. Soon the Native Son fell into a coma. When he opened his eyes he was in Paradise. He raised himself up, gave one look about and exclaimed, "What a boob that doctor was! Whad'da he mean—Paradise! Here I am still in California."

Man has of course, here as elsewhere, chained nature; set her to toil for him. She is a willing worker everywhere, but in California she puts no stay nor

stint on her productive efforts. California produces— Now up to this moment I have held myself in. Looking back on my copy I see only such meager words as "beauty", "glory", "splendor", such pale, inadequate phrases as "super-mundane fertility" and "super-solar fecundity". What use are words and phrases when one speaks of California. It is time for us to abandon them both and resort to some bright, snappy sparkling statistics.

So here goes!

California produces forty per cent of the gold, fifty per cent of the wheat, sixty per cent of the oranges, seventy per cent of the prunes, eighty per cent of the asparagus and (including the Native Daughters) ninety-nine and ninety-nine one-hundredths per cent of the peaches of the world. I pause to say here that none

Reader, I had to soft-pedal here. If I gave you the correct statistics, you wouldn't believe me.

of these figures is true. They are all made up for the occasion. But don't despair! I am sure that they don't do California justice by half. Any other Californiac—with the mathematical memory which I unfortunately lack—will provide the correct data. Somebody told me once, I seem to recall, that the Santa Clara valley produces sixty per cent of the world's prunes. But I may be mistaken. What I prefer to remember is one day's trip in that springtide of prune bloom. For hours and hours of motor speed, we glided through a snowy world that showed no speck of black bark or fleck of green leaf; a world in which the sole relief from a silent white blizzard of blossom was the blue of the sky arch, the purple of distant lupines alternating with the gold of blood-centered poppies, pouring like avalanches down hills of emerald green.

"That's what California produces in

Getting out of the scenery zone only to fall into the climate zone. Reader, it's just the same with the climate as the scenery. It's got to be done some time, so why not now?

the way of scenery and fodder. So now, let's consider the climate, even if I am invading Jesse Williams's territory. For it has magical properties—that climate of California. It makes people grow big and beautiful and strenuous; it makes flowers grow big and beautiful; it makes fleas grow big and strenuous. It offers, except in the most southern or the most mountainous regions, no such extremes of heat or cold as are found elsewhere in the country. Its marvel is of course the season which corresponds to our winter. The visitor coming, let us say in February, from the ice-bound and frost-locked East through the flat, dreary Middle West, and stalled possibly on the way, remains glued in stupefaction to the car window. In a very few hours he slides from the white, glittering snow-covered heights

of the evergreen-packed Sierras through their purple, hazy, snow-filled depths into the sudden warmth of California.

It is like waking suddenly from a nightmare of winter to a poet's or a painter's vision of spring.

Who, having seen this picture in January, could resist describing it? Easterners, I appeal to your sense of justice.

At one side, perhaps close to the train, near hills, on which the live oaks spread big, ebon-emerald umbrellas, serpentine endlessly into the distance. On the other side, far hills, bathed in an amethystine mist, invade the horizon. Between stretches the flat green field of the valley, gashed with tawny streaks that are roads and dotted with soft, silvery bunches that are frisking new-born lambs. Little white houses, with a coquettish air of perpetual summer, flaunt long windows and wooden-lace balconies, Early roses flask pink flames here and there. The green-black meshes of the eucalyptus

hedges film the distance. The madrone, richly leaved like the laurel, reflects the sunlight from a bole glistening as though freshly carved from wet gold.

Cheer up! We 're getting out of scenery and climate into

The race—a blend of many rich bloods—that California has evolved with the help of this scenery and climate is a rare brew. The physical background is Anglo-Saxon of course; and it still breaks through in the prevailing Anglo-Saxon type. To this, the Celt has brought his poetry and mysticism. To it, the Latin has contributed his art instinct; and not art instinct alone but in an infinity of combinations, the dignity of the Spaniard, the spirit of the French, the passion of the Italian.

—into—

All the foregoing is put in, not to make it harder, but because—as a Californiac—I could n't help it, and to show you what, in the way of

a State, the Native Son is accustomed to. You will have to admit that it is *some* State. The emblem on the California flag is singularly apposite—it's a bear.

—oh boy!—
San Francisco!

And if, in addition to being a Californian, this Native Son visiting the East for the first time, is also a San Franciscan, he has come from a city which is, with the exception of peacetime Paris, the gayest and with the exception of none, the happiest city in the world; a city of extraordinary picturesqueness of situation and an equally notable cosmopolitanism of atmosphere; a city which is, above all cities, a paradise for men.

San Francisco, which invents much American slang, must have provided that phrase—"this man's town." For that is what San Francisco is—a man's town.

San Francisco, or "the city", as

I dare not appeal to Easterners; but Californiacs, I ask you how could I forbear to say something about "the city"?

Californians so proudly and lovingly term her, is peculiarly fortuate in her situation and her weather. Riding a series of hills as lightly as a ship the waves, she makes real exercise of any walking within her limits. Moreover the streets are tied so intimately and inextricably to seashore and country that San Francisco's life is, in one sense, less like city life than that of any other city in the United States. Yet by the curious paradox of her climate, which compels much indoor night entertainment, reinforced by that cosmopolitanism of atmosphere, life there is city life raised to the highest limit. Last of all, its size—and personally I think there should be a federal law forbidding cities to grow any bigger than San Francisco—makes it an engaging combination of provincialism and cosmopolitanism.

Not scenery this time, Reader, nor climate, but weather. Like scenery and climate, it must be done. Hurdle this paragraph, Easterners! Keep on reading, Californiacs!

The "city" does its best to put the San Franciscan in good condition. And the weather reinforces this effort by keeping him out of doors. Because of a happy collaboration of land with sea, the region about San Francisco, the "bay" region—individual in this as in everything else—has a climate of its own. It is, notwithstanding its brief rainy season, a singularly pleasant climate. It cannot be described as "temperate" in the sense, for instance, that New England's climate is temperate. That is too harsh. Neither can it be described as "semi-tropical" in the way that Hawaii, for example, is semi-tropical. That is too soft. It combines the advantages of both with the disabilities of neither.

That sparkling briskness—the tang—which is the best the temperate cli-

You may begin to read again, Easterners; for at last I've returned to the Native Son

mate has to offer, gives the Native Son his high-powered strenuosity. That developing softness — lush — (every Native Son will admit the lush) — which is the best the semi-tropical element has to contribute, gives him his size and comeliness. The weather of San Francisco keeps the Native Son out of doors whenever it is possible through the day time. To take care of this flight into the open are seashore and mountain, city parks and country roads. That same weather drives him indoors during the evenings. And to meet this demand are hotels, restaurants, theatres, moving-picture houses, in numbers out of all proportion to the population. Again, the weather permits him to play baseball and football for unusual periods with ease, to play tennis and golf three-quarters of the year with comfort, to walk and swim

all the year with joy. Notwithstanding the combination of heavy rains with startling hill heights, he never ceases to motor day or night, winter or summer. The weather not only allows this, but the climate drives him to it.

These are the reasons why there is nothing hectic about the hordes of Native Sons who nightly motor about San Francisco, who fill its theatres and restaurants. An after-theatre group in San Francisco is as different from the tallowy, gas-bred, after-theatre groups on Broadway as it is possible to imagine. In San Francisco, many of them look as though they had just come from State-long motor trips; from camping expeditions on the beach, among the redwoods, or in the desert; from long, cold Arctic cruises, or long, hot Pacific ones. Moreover the Native Son's club encourages all this athletic instinct by offering spacious and beautiful gymnasium quarters in which to develop

it. Lacking a club, he can turn to the public baths, surely the biggest and most beautiful in the world.

Just as there is a different physical aspect to the Native Son, there is, compared to the rest of the country, a different social aspect to him. California is still young, still pioneer in outlook. Society has not yet shaken down into those tightly stratified layers, typical of the East. There is a real spirit of democracy in the air.

The first time I visited San Francisco I was impressed with the remarks of a Native Son of moderate salary who had travelled much in the East.

"This here and now San Francisco is a real man's town", he said. "I don't know so much about the women, but the men certainly can have a better time here than in any other city in the country. And then again, a poor man can live in a way and do things in a style that would be impossible in

New York. At my club I meet all kinds of men. Many of them are prominent citizens and many of them have large fortunes. I mix with them all. I don't mean to say I run constantly with the prom. cits. and the millionaires. I don't. I can't afford that. But they occasionally entertain me. And I as often entertain them. So many restaurants here are both inexpensive and good that I can return their hospitality self-respectingly and without undue expense. In New York I would not only never meet that type of man, but I could not afford to entertain him if I did."

Allied to this, perhaps, is a quality, typical of San Francisco, which I can describe only as promiscuity. That promiscuity is in its best phase a frankness; a fearlessness; a gorgeous candor which made possible the epigram that San Francisco has every vice but hypocrisy. Civically, two cross currents cut

through the city's life; one of a high-visioned enlightenment which astounds the visiting stranger by its force, its white-fire enthusiasm; the other a black sordidness and soddenness which displays but one redeeming quality—the characteristic San Franciscan candor. That openness is physical as well as spiritual. The city, dropped over its many hills like a great loose cobweb weighted thickly with the pearl cubes of buildings, with its wide streets; its frequent parks; its broad-spaced residential areas; its gardened houses in which high windows crystallize every view and sun parlors or sleeping porches catch both the first and last hint of daylight—the city itself has the effect of living in the open. Everybody is frankly interested in everybody else and in what is going on. Of all the cities in the country, San Francisco is by weather and temperament, most adapted to the pleasant French habit of open-

air eating. The clients in the barber shops, lathered like clowns and trussed up in what is perhaps the least heroic posture and costume possible for man, are seated at the windows, where they may enjoy the outside procession during the boresome processes of the shave and the hair-cut. In the windows of the downtown shops, with no pretence whatever of the curtains customary in the East, men clerks disrobe and re-robe life-sized female models of an appalling nude flesh-likeness. They dress these helpless ladies in all the fripperies of femininity from the wax out, oblivious to the flippant comments of gathering crowds. It's all a part of that civic candor somehow. Nowhere I think are eyes so clear, glances so direct and expressions so frank as in California. Nowhere is conversation and discussion more straightforward and courageous.

All that I have written thus far is only by way of preliminary to showing

you what the background of the Native Son has been and to explaining why Europe does not dazzle him much and the East not at all. Remember that he is instinctively an athlete and that he has never dissipated his magnificent strength in fighting weather. If he is a little—mind you, I say only a *little*—inclined to use that strength on more entertaining dissipation, he is as likely to restore the balance by much physical exercise.

Remember that all his life he has gazed on beauty—beauty tragic and haunting, beauty gorgeous and gay. Remember he is accustomed to enormous sizes; superb heights; splendid distances; spacious vistas. That California does not produce an annual crop of megalomaniacs is the best argument I know

There I go again! Enormous! Superb! Splendid! Spacious! You see how impossible it is to keep your vocabulary down when California is your subject. Another moment and I shall be saying more unique.

for the superiority of heredity over environment.

Remember, too, that all his life the Native Son has soaked in an art atmosphere potentially as strong and individual as ancient Greece or renaisance Italy. The dazzling country side, the sulphitic brew of races, the cosmopolitan "city" have taken care of that. That art-spirit accounts for such minor California phenomena as photography raised to unequalled art levels and shops whose simple beautiful interiors resemble the private galleries of art collectors; it accounts for such major phenomena as the Stevenson monument, the "Lark", the annual Grove Play of the Bohemian Club, and the Exposition of 1915.

The tiny monument to Stevenson, tucked away in a corner soaked with romantic memories—Portsmouth Square—compares favorably with the charming memorials to the French dead. It is a thing of beautiful proportions. A

little stone column supports a bronze ship, its sails bellying robustly to the whip of the Pacific winds. The inscription—a well known quotation from the author—is topped simply by "To remember Robert Louis Stevenson."

The "Lark" is perhaps the most delicious bit of literary fooling that this country has ever produced. It raised its blythe song at the Golden Gate, but it was heard across a whole continent. For two years, Gelett Burgess, Bruce Porter, Porter Garnett, Willis Polk, Ernest Peixotto, and Florence Lundborg performed in it all the artistic antics that their youth, their originality, their high spirits suggested. Professor Norton, speaking to a class at Harvard University, said that the two literary events of the

Perhaps you will object that some of these are not Native Sons. But hush! Californians consider anybody who has stayed five minutes in the State—a real Californian. And believe us, Reader, by that time most of them have become not Californians but Californiacs.

decade between 1890 and 1900 were the fiction of the young Kipling and the verse that appeared in the "Lark."

The Grove-Play is an annual incident of which I fancy only California could be capable. Of course the calculable quality of the weather helps in this possibility. But the art-spirit, born and bred in the Californian, is the driving force. Every year the Bohemian Club produces in its summer annex—a beautiful grove of redwoods beside the Russian river—a play in praise of the forest. The stage is a natural one, a cleared hill slope with redwoods for wings. The play is written, staged, produced and acted by members of the club. The incidental music is also written by them. Scarcely has one year's play been produced before the rehearsals for the next begin. The result is a performance of a finished beauty which not only astounds Easterners, but surprises Europeans. Al-

though undoubtedly it is the best, it is only one of numberless out-of-door masques, plays and pageants produced all over California.

As for the Exposition of 1915, when I say that for many Californians, it will take the edge off some of the beauty of Europe, I am quite serious. For it was colored in the gorgeous gamut of the Orient, clamant yellows, oranges, golds, combined with mysterious blues, muted scarlets. And it was illuminated as no Exposition has ever before been illuminated; with lights that dripped down from the cornices of the buildings; or shot up from their foundations; or gleamed through transparent pillars; or glistened behind tumbling waters; or sparkled within leaping fountains. Some of this light even floated from enormous braziers, thereby filling the night with clouds of mist-flame; or flooded across the bay from reservoirs of tinted glass, thereby sluicing the

whole dream-world with fluid color. All this was reflected in still lakes and quiet pools. The procession of one year's seasons gradually subdued its gorgeousness to an effect of antiquity, toned but still colorful. The quick-growing California vines covered it with an age-old luxuriance of green. As for the architecture—I repeat that the Californian, seeing for the first time the square of St. Peter's in Rome and of St. Mark's in Venice, is likely to suffer a transitory but definite sense of disappointment. For the big central court of the Exposition held suggestions of both these squares. It seemed quite as old and permanent. And it was much more striking in situation, with the bay offering an immense, flat blue extension at one side and the city hills, pricked with lights, slanting up and away from the other. By day, the joyous, whimsical fantasy of the colossal Tower of Jewels, which caught the light in millions of

rainbow sparkles, must, for children at least, have made of its entrance the door to fairyland. At night, there was the tragedy of old history about those faintly fiery facades . . . those enormous shadow-haunted hulks . . .

Remember, last of all, as naturally as from infancy the Native Son has breathed the tonic and toxic air of California, he has breathed the spirit of democracy. That spirit of democracy is so strong, indeed, that the enfranchised women of California give intelligent guidance to the feminists of a whole nation; public opinion is so enlightened that it sets a pace for the rest of the country and labor is so progressive that it is a revelation to the visiting sociologist.

Indeed, nowhere in the whole world, I fancy, is labor so healthy, so happy, so prosperous. California brings to the workers' problems the free enlightened attitude characteristic of her. As be-

tween on the one hand hordes of unemployed; huge slums; poverty spots; and on the other a well-paid laboring class with fair hours, she chooses the latter, thereby storing up for herself eugenic capital.

I have always wished that California would strike off a series of medals symbolic of some of the Utopian conditions which prevail there. I would like to suggest a model for one. I was walking once in the vicinity of the Ferry with a woman who knows the labor movement of California as well as an outsider may. Suddenly she whispered in my ear, "Oh look! Isn't he a typical California labor man?"

It was his noon hour and, in his shirt sleeves, he was leaning against the wall, a pipe in his mouth. He was tall and lean; not an ounce of superfluous flesh on his splendid frame, but a great deal of muscle that lay in long, faintly swelling contours against it. He was black-

haired and black-mustached; both hair and mustache were lightly touched with grey. His thick-lashed blue eyes sparkled as clear and happy as a child's. In their expression and, indeed, in the whole relaxed attitude of his fine, long figure, was an entertained, contented interest, an amused tolerance of the passing crowd. You will see this type, among others equally fine, again and again, in the unions of California.

Yes, that spirit of democracy is not only strong but militant.

Militant! I never could make up my mind which made the fightingest reading in the San Francisco papers, the account of Friday's boxing contest or of Monday's meeting of the Board of Supervisors. They *do* say that a visiting Easterner was taken to the Board of Supervisors one afternoon. In the evening he was regaled with a battle royal. And, and—*they do say*—he fell asleep at the battle royal because it

seemed so tame in comparison with the Board of Supervisors.

The athletic instinct in the Native Son accounts for the star athletes, boxers, tennis players, ball players; that art instinct for the painters, illustrators, sculptors, playwrights, fiction writers, poets, actors, photographers, producers; that spirit of democracy for the labor leaders and politicians with whom California has inundated the rest of the country.

I started to make a list of the famous Californians in all these classes. But, when I had filled one sheet with names, realizing that no matter how hard I cudgelled my memory, I would inevitably forget somebody of importance, I tore it up. Take a copy of "Who's Who" and cut out the lives of all those who don't come from California and see what a respectable-sized volume you have left.

If any woman tourist should ask me

what was the greatest menace to the peace of mind of a woman travelling alone in California, I should answer instantly—the Native Son. I wish I could draw a picture of him. Perhaps he's too good looking. Myself, I think the enfranchised women of California should bring injunctions—or whatever is the proper legal weapon—against so dangerous a degree of male pulchritude. Of course the Native Son could reply that, in this respect, he has nothing on the Native Daughter, she being without doubt the most beautiful woman in the world. To, this, however, she could retort that *that* is as it should be, but it's no fair for mere men to be stealing her stuff.

That agglomeration of the Anglo-Saxon, the Celt and the Latin, has endowed the Native Son with the pulchritude of all three races. In eugenic combination with Ireland, California is peculiarly happy. The climate has

made him tall and big. His athletic habits has made him shapely and strong. Both have given him clear eyes, a smooth skin, swift grace of motion.

This is misleading!

Those clear eyes invest him with a look of innocence and unsophistication. He is as rich in dimples as though they had been shaken onto him from a salt-cellar. One in each cheek, one in his chin—count them—three! The Native Daughter would have a license to complain of this if she herself didn't look as thou she'd been sprinkled with dimples from a pepper-caster. In addition—oh, but what's the use? Who ever managed to paint the lily with complimentary words or gild refined gold with fancy phrases? The region bounded by Post, Bush, Mason and Taylor Streets contains San Francisco's most famous clubs. Any Congress of Eugenists wishing to establish a standard of male beauty for the human race

has only to place a moving-picture machine at the entrance of any one of these—let us say the Athletic Club. The results will at the same time enrapture and discourage a dazzled world. I will prophesy that some time those same enfranchised women of California are going to realize the danger of such a sight bursting unexpectedly on the unprepared woman tenderfoot. Then they'll rope off that dangerous area, establish guards at the corners and put up "Stop! Look! Listen!" signs where they'll do the most good. And as proof of all these statements, I refer you to that array of young gods, filing endlessly over the sporting pages of the California newspapers.

A Native Son told me once that he had been given the star-assignment of newspaper history. Somebody offered a prize to the most beautiful daughter of California. And his job was to travel all over the State to inspect the candi-

dates. He said it was a shame to take his pay and I agreed that it was sheer burglary. All I've got to say is that if anybody wants to offer a prize for the handsomest Native Son in California, I'll *give* my services as judge. I will add that after nearly two years of war-time Europe, in which I have had an opportunity to study some of the best military material of England, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland — the Native Son leads them all. I am inclined to think he is the best physical specimen in the world.

And I'll pay for the privilege. What the Chamber of Commerce ought to do, though, is to advertise that this concession will be put up at auction. Indeed, if this sale were made an annual event, women bidders would flock to California from all over the world.

But there is a great deal more to the Native Son than mere comeliness. That long list of nationally-famous Californians proves this in one way, the high average of his citizenship in another.

Physically he is a big, strong, high-geared, high-powered racing machine; and he has an inexhaustible supply of energy for motive fluid and an extraordinary degree of initiative and enterprise for driving forces. That initiative and enterprise spring part from his inalienable pep, his vivid interest in life; and part from that constructive looseness of the social structure, which gives them both full play. If the Native Son sees anything he wants to do, he instantly does it. If he sees anything that he wants to get, he promptly takes it. If he sees anything that he wants to be, he immediately *is* it. He saunters into New York in a *dégagé* way and takes the whole city by storm. He strolls through Europe with an *insouciant* air and finds it almost as good as California. All this, supplemented by his abiding conviction that California must have the most and best and biggest of everything, accounts for what California has

done in the sixty-odd years of her existence, accounts for what San Francisco has done in the decade since her great disaster, accounts for that war-time Exposition; perhaps the most elaborate, certainly the most beautiful the world has ever seen.

The Native Son has a strong sense of humor and he invents his own slang. He expresses himself with the picturesqueness of diction inevitable to the West and with much of its sly, dry humor. But there is a joyous quality to the San Francisco *blague* which sets it apart, even in the West. You find its counterpart only in Paris. Perhaps it is that, being reenforced by wit, it explodes more quickly than the humor of the rest of the country. The Californian with his bulk, his beauty, his boast and his *blague* descending on New York is very like the native of the Midi who with similar qualities, is always taking Paris by storm. Marseilles, the

chief metropolis of the Midi, has a famous promenade—less than half a dozen blocks, packed tight with the peoples and colors and odors of two continents—called the *Cannebière*. The Marseillais, returning from his first visit to Paris, remarks with condescending scorn that Paris has no *Cannebière*. Of course Paris has her network of Grand Boulevards but— So the Californiac patronizingly discovers that New York has no Market Street, no Golden Gate Park, no Twin Peaks, no Mt. Tamalpais, no seals. Above all—and this is the final thrust—New York is *flat*.

Some day medical journals will give the same space to the victims of California hospitality that they now allot to victims of Oriental famines. For with Californians, hospitality is first an instinct, then an art, then a religion and finally a mania. It is utterly impossible to resist it, but it takes a strong consti-

tution to survive. Californians will g(

Somebody ought to invent a serum that renders the victim immune.

to any length or troubl(in this matter; thei hospitality is all mixe(up with their art in stinct and their sense of humor. Fo no matter what graceful tribute the pay to famous visiting aliens, its for mality is always leavened by their deli cious wit. And no matter how muc fun they poke at departing or returnin friends, it is always accompanied b some social tribute of great charm an originality.

A loyal Adopted Son of California, novelist and muckraker, returned a fe years ago to the beloved land of hi adoption. His arrival was made th occasion of a dinner by his Club. H had come back specifically on a muck raking tour. But it happened that dur ing his absence he had written a serie of fiction stories, all revolving about th figure of a middle-aged woman me

dium. In the midst of the dinner, a fellow clubman disguised as a middle-aged woman medium began to read the future of the guests. She discoursed long and accurately on the personal New York affairs of the returned muck-raker. To get such information, the wires between the committee who got up the dinner and his friends in New York must have been kept hot for hours. Moreover, just after midnight, a newsboy arrived with editions of a morning paper of which the whole first page was devoted to him. There were many, highly-colored accounts of all-night revelries; expense accounts, of which every second item was champagne and every fifth bromo-selzer, etc., etc.

Of course but a limited number of papers with this extraneous sheet were printed and those distributed only at the dinner. One, however, was sent to the Eastern magazine which had

dispatched our muckraking hero to the Golden Gate. They replied instantly and heatedly by wire to go on with his work, that in spite of the outrageous slander of the opposition, they absolutely trusted him.

This was only one of an endless succession of dinners which dot the social year with their originality.

During the course of the Exposition, the governing officials presented so many engraved placques to California citizens and to visiting notabilities that after a while, the Californians began to josh the system. A certain San Franciscan is famous for much generous and unobtrusive philanthropy. Also his self-evolved translation of the duties of friendship is the last word on that subject. He was visited unexpectedly at his office one day by a group of friends. With much ceremony, they presented him with a placque — an amusing plaster burlesque of the real

article. He had the Californian sense of humor and he thoroughly enjoyed the situation. Admitting that the joke was on him, he celebrated according to time-honored rites. After his friends had left, he found on his desk a small uninscribed package which had apparently been left by accident. He opened it. Inside was a beautiful leather box showing his initials in gold. And within the box was a small bronze placque exquisitely engraved by a master-artist . . . bearing a message of appreciation exquisitely phrased . . . the names of all his friends. I know of no incident more typical of the taste and the humor with which the Native Son performs every social function. That sense of humor does not lessen but it lightens the gallantry and chivalry which is the earmark of Westerners. It makes for that natural perfection of manners which is also typical of the Native Son.

Touching the matter of their manners . . . A woman writer I know very well once went to a boxing-match in San Francisco. Women are forbidden to attend such events, so that a special permission had to be obtained for her. She was warned beforehand that the audience might manifest its disapproval in terms both audible and uncomplimentary. She entered the arena in considerable trepidation of spirit. It was an important match—for the lightweight championship of the world. She occupied a ring-side box where, it is likely, everybody saw her. There were ten thousand men in the arena and she was the only woman. But in all the two hours she sat there, she was not once made conscious, by a word or glance in her direction, that anybody had noticed her presence. That I think is a perfect example of perfect mob-manners.

Perhaps that instinct, not only for

fair but for chivalrous play, which also characterizes the Native Son, comes from pioneer days. Certainly it is deepened by a very active interest in all kinds of sports. I draw my two examples of this from the boxing world. This is a story that Sam Berger tells about Andrew Gallagher.

It happened in that period when both men were amateur lightweights and Mr. Gallagher was champion of the Pacific Coast. Mr. Berger challenged Mr. Gallagher and defeated him. The margin of victory was so narrow, however, that Mr. Gallagher felt justified in asking for another match, and got it.

This time Mr. Berger's victory was complete. In a letter, Mr. Berger said, "A woman cannot possibly understand what being a champion means to a man. It isn't so much the championship itself but it's the slap on the shoulder and the whispered comment as you

pass, 'There goes our champion!' that counts. Looking back at it from the thirties, it isn't so important; but in the twenties it means a lot. My dressing room was near Gallagher's, so that, although he didn't know this, I could not help overhearing much that was said there. After we got back to our rooms, I heard some friend of Gallagher's refer to me as 'a damn Jew'. What was my delight at Gallagher's magnanimity to hear him answer, 'Why do you call him a damn Jew? He is a very fine fellow and a better boxer than me, the best day I ever saw.'''

That incident seems to me typical of the Native Son; and the long unbroken friendship that grew out of it, equally so.

A few years ago an interview with Willie Ritchie appeared in a New York paper. He had just boxed Johnny Dundee, defeating him. In passing I

may state that Mr. Ritchie was, during that winter, taking an agricultural course at Columbia College, and that this is quite typical of the kind of professional athlete California turns out. You would have expected that in a long two-column interview, Mr. Ritchie would have devoted much of the space to himself, his record, his future plans. Not at all. It was all about Johnnie Dundee, for whom personally he seems to have an affectionate friendship and for whose work a rueful and decidedly humorous appreciation. He analyzed with great sapience the psychological effect on the audience of Mr. Dundee's ring-system of perpetual motion. He described with great delight a punch that Mr. Dundee had landed on the very top of his head. In fact Mr. Dundee's publicity manager could do no better than to use parts of this interview for advertising purposes.

I began that last paragraph with the

phrase, "A few years ago". But since that time a whole era seems to have passed—that heart-breaking era of the Great War. And now the Native Son has entered into and emerged from a new and terrible game. He has needed—and I doubt not displayed—all that he has of strength, natural and developed; of keenness and coolness; of bravery and fortitude; of capacity to endure and yet josh on.

Perhaps after all, though, the best example of the Native Son's fairness was his enfranchisement of the Native Daughter and the way in which he did it. Sometime, when the stories of all the suffrage fights are told, we shall get the personal experiences of the women who worked in that whirlwind campaign. It will make interesting reading; for it is both dramatic and picturesque. And it will redound forever and ever and ever to the glory of the Native Son.

The Native Son—in the truest sense of the romantic—is a romantic figure. He could scarcely avoid being that, for he comes from the most romantic State in the Union and, if from San Francisco, the most romantic city in our modern world. It is, I believe, mainly his sense of romance that drives him into the organization which he himself has called the Native Sons of the Golden West; an adventurous instinct that has come down to us from mediaeval times, urging men to form into congenial company for offence and defence, and to offer personality the opportunity for picturesque masquerade.

That romantic background not only explains the Native Son but the long line of extraordinary fiction, with California for a background, which California has produced. California though is the despair of fiction writers. It offers so many epochs; such a mixture of nationalities; so many and such viol-

ently contrasted atmospheres, that it is difficult to make it credible. The gold rush . . . the pioneers . . . the Vigilantes . . . the Sand Lot days . . . San Francisco before the fire . . . the period of reconstruction. As for the drama lying submerged everywhere in the labor movement . . . the novelists have not even begun to mine below the surface. To the fiction-writer, the real, everyday life is so dramatic that the temptation is to substitute for invention the literal records of some literary moving-picture machine.

The San Franciscans will inundate you with stories of that old San Francisco. And what stories they are! The water-front, Chinatown, the Barbary Coast and particularly that picturesque neighborhood, south of Market Street —here were four of the great drama-breeding areas of the world. The San Franciscans of the past generation will tell you that the new San

Francisco is tamed and ordered. That may be all true. But to one at least who never saw the old city, romance shows her bewildering face everywhere in the new one. Almost anything can happen there and almost everything does. Life explodes. It's as though there were a romantic dynamite in solution in the air. You make a step in any direction and—bang!—you bump into adventure. There is something about the sparkle and bustle and gaiety of the streets . . . There is something about the friendliness and the vivacity of the people . . . There is something about the intimacy and color and gaiety of the restaurants. . . .

In fact, all the time you stay in California you're living in a story.

Let me tell some stories to prove my point. Anybody who has lived in San Francisco has heard them by scores. I pick one or two at random.

A group of Native Sons were once

dining in one of the little Bohemian restaurants of San Francisco. Two of them made a bet with the others that they could kiss every woman in the room. They went from table to table and in mellifluous accents, plus a strain of hyperbole, explained their predicament to each lady, concluding with a respectful demand for a kiss. Every woman in the room (with the gallant indulgence of her swain) acceded to this amazing request. In fifteen minutes all the kisses were collected and the wager won. I don't know on which this story reflects the greater credit—the Native Daughter or the Native Son. But I do know that it couldn't have happened anywhere but in California.

The first time I visited San Francisco shortly after the fire, I was walking one day in rather a lonely part of the city. There were many burnt areas about: only a few pedestrians. Presently, I

saw a man and woman leaning against a fence, absorbed in conversation. Apparently they did not hear my approach; they were too deep in talk. They did not look out of the ordinary and, indeed, I should not have given them a second glance if, as I passed, I had not heard the woman say, "And did you kill anyone else?"

A man told me that once early in the morning he was walking through Chinatown. There was nobody else on the street except, a little distance ahead, a child carrying a small bundle. Suddenly just as she passed, a panel in one of the houses slid open . . . a hand came out . . . the child slipped the bundle into the hand . . . the hand disappeared . . . the wall panel closed up. The child trotted on as though nothing had happened . . . disappeared around the corner. When my friend reached the house, it was impossible to locate the panel.

A reporter I know was leaving his home one morning when there came a ring at his telephone. "There is something wrong in apartment number blank, house number blank, on your street," said Central. "Will you please go over there at once?" He went. Somehow he got into the house. Nobody answered his ring at the apartment; he had to break the door open. Inside a very beautiful girl in a gay negligée was lying dead on a couch, a bottle of poison on the floor beside her. He investigated the case. The dead girl had been in the habit of calling a certain number, and she always used a curious identifying code-phrase. The reporter investigated that number. The rest of the story is long and thrilling, but finally he ran down a group of lawbreakers who had been selling the dead girl drugs, were indirectly responsible for her suicide. Do you suppose such a ripe story could have dropped straight

from the Tree of Life into the hand of a reporter anywhere except in California?

A woman I know was once waiting on the corner for a car. Near, she happened casually to notice, was a Chinaman of a noticeable, dried antiquity, shuffling along under the weight of a bunch of bananas. She was at that moment considering a curious mental problem and, in her preoccupation, she drew her hand down the length of her face in a gesture that her friends recognize as characteristic. Did she, by accident, stumble on one of the secret signals of a great secret traffic? That is her only explanation of what followed. For suddenly the old Chinaman shuffled to her side, unobtrusively turned his back towards her. One of the bananas on top the bunch, easy to the reach of her hand, was opened, displaying itself to be emptied of fruit. But in its place was *something*—some-

thing little, wrapped in tissue paper. Her complete astonishment apparently warned the vendor of drugs of his mistake. He scuttled across the street; in a flash had vanished in a back alley.

One could go on forever. I cannot forbear another. A woman was passing through the theatrical district of San Francisco one night, just before the theatres let out. The street was fairly deserted. Suddenly she was accosted by a strange gentleman of suave address. Obviously he had dallied with the demon and was spectacularly the worse for it. He was carrying an enormous, a very beautiful—and a very expensive—bouquet. In a short speech of an impassioned eloquence and quite as flowery as his tribute, he presented her with the bouquet. She tried to avoid accepting it. But this was not, without undue publicity, to be done. Finally to put an end to the scene, she bore off her booty. She has often won-

dered what actress was deprived of her over-the-foot-lights trophy by the sudden freak of an exhilarated messenger.

I know that the Native Son works and works hard. The proof of that is California itself. San Francisco twice rebuilt, the progressive city of Los Angeles, all the merry enterprising smaller California cities and towns. But, somehow, he plays so hard at his work and works so hard at his play that you are always wondering whether it's all the time he works or all the time he plays. At any rate, out of his work comes gaiety and out of his play seriousness. His activities are so many that when I try to make my imagined program of his average day, I should provide one not of twenty-four hours, but of seventy-two.

I imagine him going down to his office at about nine in the morning, working until noon as though driven by steam and electricity; then lunching

with a party of Native Sons, all filled with jocund japeful joshing Native Son humor which brims over in showers of Native Son wit. I imagine him returning to an afternoon of brief but concentrated strenuous labor, then going for a run in the Park, or tennis, or golf, ending with a swim; presenting himself fine and fit at his club at first-cocktail time. I imagine him dining at his club or at a restaurant or at a stag-dinner, always in the company of other joyous Native Sons; going to the Orpheum, motoring through the Park afterwards; and finally indulging in another bite before he gets to bed. Sometime during the process, he has assisted in playing a graceful practical joke on a trusting friend. He has attended a meeting to boost a big, new developing project for California. He has made a speech. He has contributed to some pressing charity. He has swung into at least two political fights.

He has attended a pageant or a fiesta or a carnival. And he has managed to conduct his wooing of that beautiful (and fortunate) Native Daughter who will some day become Mrs. Native Son.

Really my favorite hour is every hour.

Every hour in San Francisco is a charming hour. Perhaps my favorite comes anywhere between six and eight. Then "The City" is brilliant with lights; street lamps, shop windows, roof advertising signs. The hotels are a-dance and a-dazzle with life. Flowers and greens make mats and cushions of gorgeous color at the downtown corners. At one end of Market Street, the Ferry building is outlined in electricity, sometimes in color; at the other end the delicate outlines of Twin Peaks are merging with night. Perhaps swinging towards the horizon there is a crescent moon—that gay strong young bow which

should be the emblem of California's perpetual youth and of her augmenting power. Perhaps close to the crescent flickers the evening star—that jewel on the brow of night which should be a symbol of San Francisco's eternal sparkle. And, perhaps floating over the City, a sheer high fog mutes the crescent's gold to a daffodil yellow; winds moist gauzes over the thrilling evening star. At the top of the high hill-streets, the lamps run in straight strings or pendant necklaces. Down their astonishing slopes slide cars like glass boxes filled with liquid light; motors whose front lamps flood the asphalt with bubbling gold. If it be Christmas—and nowhere is Christmas so Christmasy as in California—the clubs and hotels show facades covered with jewel-designs in red and green lights; mistletoe, holly, stack high the sidewalks on each side of the flower stands. The beautiful Native Daugh-

ter, eyes dancing, lips smiling, dressed with much color and more *chic*, is everywhere. And everywhere too, crowding the streets, thronging the cafes, jamming the theatres, flooding the parks, filling the endless files of motor-car, until before your very eyes, "the city" seems to spawn men, is—

Generous, genial, gay; handsome; frank and fine; careless and care-free; vital, virile, vigorous; engaging and debonair; witty and winning and wise; humorous and human; kindly and courteous; high-minded, high-hearted, high-spirited; here's to him! Ladies, this toast must be drunk standing—the Native Son.

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